

SOLAR FACTSHEET

Contra Costa County Climate Leaders

A project of Generation Green - a 501(c)3 Nonprofit organization

Find Links to Other Local Government Policy Opportunities at
www.cccclimateleaders.org

WHAT?

[Senate Bill 32](#) was passed in September of 2016 which requires the state board to ensure that statewide greenhouse gas emissions are reduced to 40% below the 1990 level by 2030. Increasing solar installations is a great way for cities to help meet this required goal, especially since many cities around the nation are committing to 100% renewable energy. In addition, California's Renewable Portfolio Standard program, which requires utilities to increase their renewable energy supply to 50% by 2030 will have an impact statewide.

WHY?

The state of California has ambitious goals for the development of [zero net energy buildings](#). The recent CA energy efficiency standards rulemaking is considering mandatory solar: [2019 energy standards and presentations](#).

The [Bay Area's 2017 Clean Air Plan](#): *Spare the Air, Cool the Climate, Accelerate Low Carbon Buildings*: expand the production of low-carbon, renewable energy by promoting on-site technologies such as rooftop solar and ground-source heat pumps.

Economic feasibility: [U.S. Solar Market Has Record-Breaking Year](#) (in 2016), *Total Market Poised to Triple in Next Five Years*. [Distributed PV saw significant growth in 2015](#), particularly in the residential sector, where total installed capacity rose much faster over the year than in the industrial or commercial sectors.

CA Department of Community Development and Services (CSD) is working with community partners statewide to [install rooftop solar photovoltaic systems](#) and solar water heaters on low-income households and buildings.

WHERE?

A number of cities across the country and many here locally are using a variety of methods to increase solar rooftops in their cities:

Update City Codes

- Cities can modify statewide mandatory requirements (CAL Green) to add more restrictive provisions based on local conditions as necessary, so long as they are found to be "cost-effective," or that the benefits outweigh the costs over the measure lifetime. [Such modifications to the Energy Code](#) and CAL Green are known as "reach codes."

County wide initiatives

- Both local government officials and nonprofits often team together to take county wide Initiatives. [The State of Solar in Sonoma County](#) shows great success; and currently [all of the Sonoma cities](#) have opted for 100% renewables; or Deep Green for their municipal operations.

Expedited Permitting

- [Concord](#), [El Cerrito](#), and [Richmond](#) have expedited and/or streamlined solar permitting. East Bay cities announce [streamlined process for solar permits](#).

Partnerships

- [San Pablo](#) has a partnership with GRID Alternatives (company). Program reopens in August 2018. [Lafayette](#) is using SunShares which offers discounted solar starting at 15% below market rates.



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Policy and Planning

- In order to expedite the adoption of solar technologies, the City of Fremont [adopted an energy reach code](#) that goes beyond the minimum provision of solar readiness to require the mandatory installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) systems in new residential developments.

Financing Options

- Many cities are utilizing various PACE programs; gives property owners (commercial and residential) the option of financing energy efficiency, water efficiency and renewable energy improvements through a voluntary assessment on their property tax bills: [Sonoma County's Energy Independence Program](#). They provide free solar consultations.
- The city of Sunset Valley, Texas has a [solar water heating rebate program](#). The local rebate acts as an add-on to the solar water heating rebates that are offered by Austin Energy to its electric customer.
- St. Lucie County in Florida has partnered with local financial institutions and community leaders to establish the non-profit [Solar and Energy Loan Fund \(SELF\)](#), which administers a low-interest loan program.

HOW?

Resources

- [Bay Area Solar Photovoltaic Ordinance Toolkit](#), and [How Smart Local Policies are Expanding Solar in America](#).
- [Local ordinances](#), including supporting materials. [Model solar ordinance](#) and other similar measures.
- [CA Energy Commission Online Resource Center](#) to help with energy standards compliance and has many [external education resources](#)
- [Solar Resilient](#) is easy to use, and a system owner can set multiple parameters.

Bulk purchasing

- [Diablo Innovation Alliance](#): The Rooftop Solar Challenge is part of the DOE SunShot Initiative, which seeks to reduce the costs of installing residential and small commercial solar PV systems so that solar energy is cost-competitive with other forms of energy by the end of the decade.
- There are [discounted solar](#) and electric vehicles for Bay Area residents.

Community Choice Energy

- [Community Choice Energy](#) is the practice of pooling consumer electricity demand within a region for the purpose of procuring energy and selling it to customers. The existing energy utility (PG&E) remains responsible for transmission, distribution, and billing. The most common reason for jurisdictions to pursue CCA is to promote electricity generation from renewable energy sources and offer consumers a choice in purchasing electricity with potential opportunities for cost savings.
- MCE will provide service to [14 local governments in Contra Costa](#); also cities (the city municipal operations, as well as residents and commercial properties) can opt up to 100% renewables using [MCE's Deep Green](#) program.

Incentives and permitting

- [Solar panel incentives, rebates & tax breaks](#), and [solar zoning and permitting](#).
- Efficient solar permitting for your jurisdiction [here](#).



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FINANCIAL RESOURCES

- [California Solar Rebates and Incentives](#) (full detailed list).
- [Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program](#).
- [These grants](#) are designed to be flexible, catalytic dollars to help organizations explore new horizons in their clean energy work.
- [A resource from BAAQMD](#) to help cities adopt a basic solar ordinance to install PV on single/multifamily residence.
- Cities can use [this resource for on-bill financing](#) to fund energy-efficiency projects. Money left over for deferred maintenance work, could be put into solar and battery storage.
- [Local government Renewable Energy](#) Self-Generation Bill Credit Transfer program (RES-BCT).
- Energy Efficiency financing programs from CAEATFA: [Sales and Use Tax Exclusion Program \(STE\)](#) and the [Residential Energy Efficiency Loan \(REEL\)](#) program.
- Funding Wizard tool from [CEC's Energy Partnership program](#) – helps cities perform an energy audit on their facilities to identify cost-effective energy efficiency upgrades.
- [CA Energy Commission financing](#), and also see the [New Solar Homes Funding Partnership](#).

